

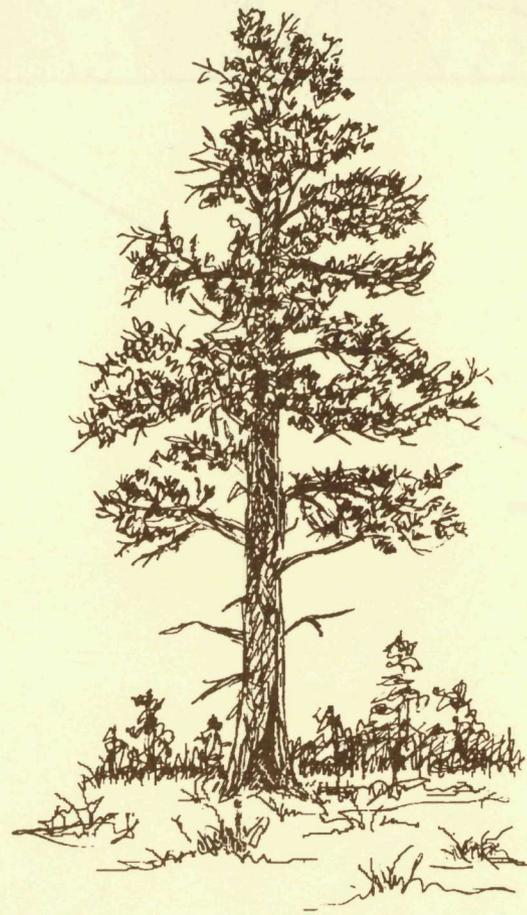
Bureau of Land Management  
1000 South Ninth Street  
P.O. Box 151  
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

BLM

# OREGON

---

## LOST FOREST RESEARCH NATURAL AREA



## THE LOST FOREST

The Lost Forest Research Natural Area (RNA) was established in 1972 to preserve a unique example of relict ponderosa pine and associated vegetation within a region of sagebrush-steppe. The RNA comprises 8,960 acres. RNA's are established for study and protection of biological and/or physical features, with natural processes allowed to dominate.

### ENVIRONMENT

Lost Forest RNA is located at the eastern edge of the Fort Rock Basin, 40 miles from the nearest contiguous ponderosa forest. Elevations within the RNA range from 4,400 feet to 4,600 feet. The mean annual precipitation in the Lost Forest is approximately 9.5 inches, with temperatures ranging from below zero to highs near 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Ponderosa typically requires at least 14 inches of annual rainfall, which is part of the mystery of the Lost Forest.

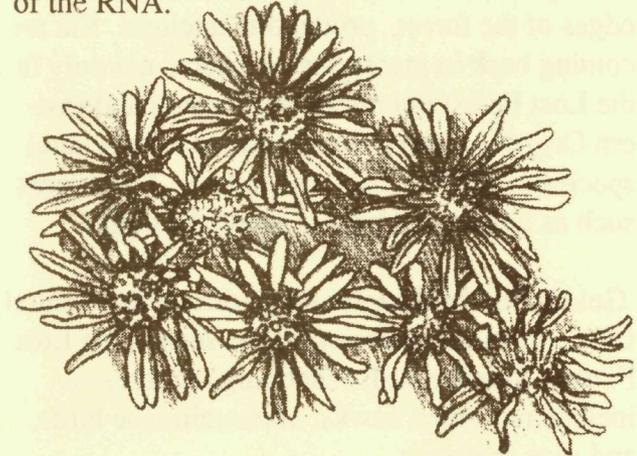
The soils of the forest are formed from lake sediments, eolian deposits, and alluvial materials. Pumice sands from Mount Mazama (Crater Lake) and Newberry Crater appear in the surface of nearly all the soils. The deep sandy soil at Lost Forest is the major factor favorable for pine survival under the present arid climate.

Moving sand dunes are also a feature of this area, with an extensive dune system covering some 16,000 acres to the south and west of the forest.

### PLANTS

There are six distinct plant communities in the Lost Forest (see map). Ponderosa pine/big

sagebrush (*Pinus ponderosa/Artemisia tridentata*) occupies 791 acres in the heart of the forest. This plant community, with open stands of pine, occurs in deep sandy soils. Ponderosa pine/bitterbrush (*Pinus ponderosa/Purshia tridentata*) is found on 605 acres in the east half of the RNA.



Showy Townsendia

The largest plant community in the RNA is western juniper-ponderosa pine/big sagebrush (*Juniperus occidentalis-Pinus ponderosa/Artemisia tridentata*). This community covers 4,515 acres and is predominantly found in the west and central portions of the forest.

On the eastern border of the RNA there is 582 acres of western juniper/Idaho fescue (*Juniperus occidentalis/Festuca idahoensis*). With wind erosion at a minimum this plant community remains relatively stable. The north and south-east portions of the RNA are dominated by two shrub communities encompassing 1,955 acres. The big sagebrush community occurs in the non-alkaline soils of old lake beds, while the silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*) community, though very restricted in the RNA, is found in alkaline soils of old lake beds.



Lakeview District



## WILDLIFE

Even with no surface water present in the Lost Forest, one can find a wide range of animal life. The most commonly seen animals are black-tailed jack rabbits, mule deer, and along the edges of the forest, pronghorn antelope. Elk are coming back in increasing numbers, not only in the Lost Forest but throughout central and eastern Oregon. Closer observation reveals several species of rodents, bats, and lizards. Carnivores such as bobcat and badger prowl the night.

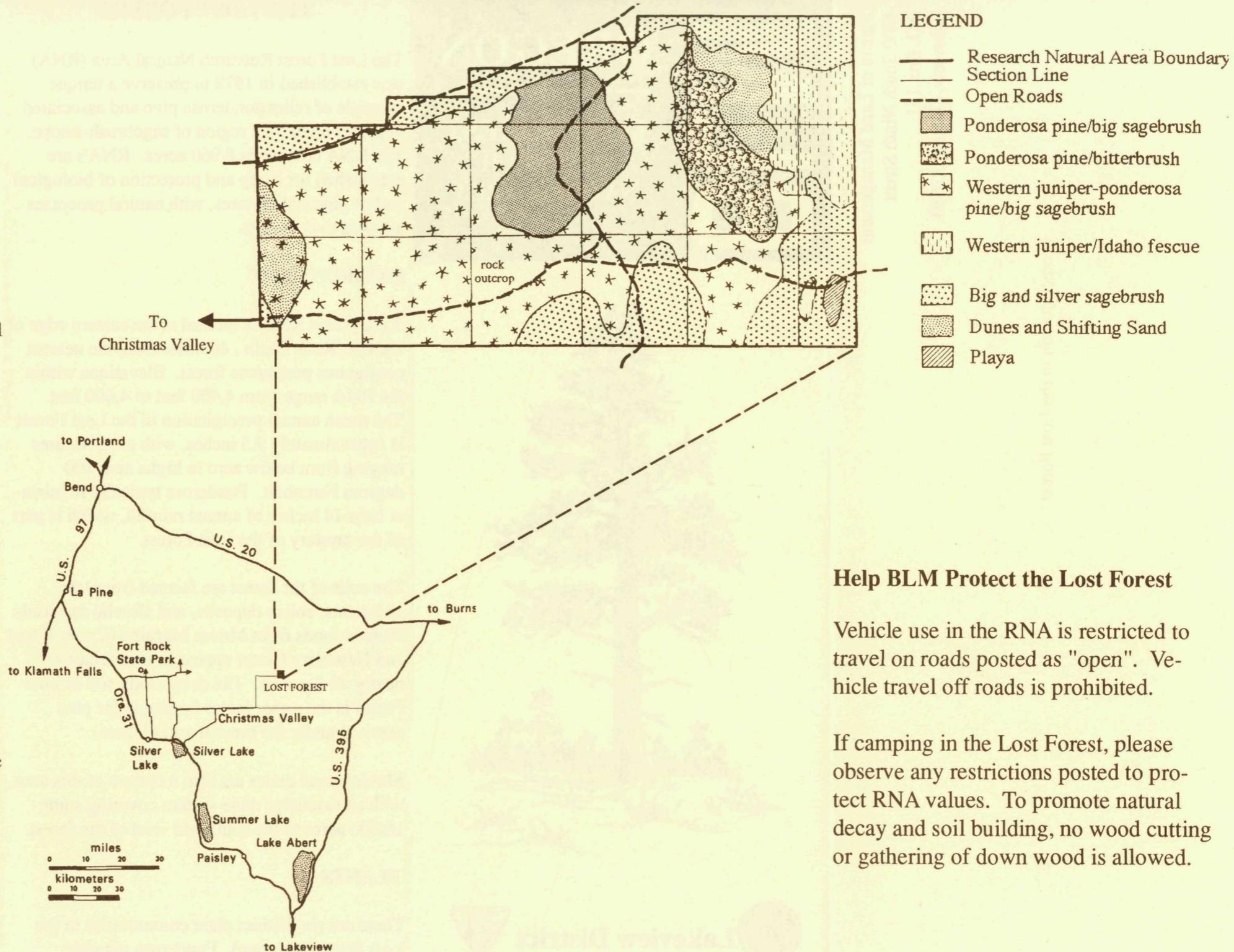
Golden and bald eagles range throughout central Oregon and can occasionally be seen in the Lost Forest. Smaller birds inhabiting the forest include red-tailed hawks, mountain blue birds, and sage sparrows.

## HISTORY

European settlement began in the Fort Rock Basin after 1865. By 1906 there were 120 homesteads, with a post office established at Cliff. Pines from the Lost Forest were cut for houses, corrals, and firewood. Most homesteads were abandoned by the 1920's when dry years brought an end to most dry land farming in the area.

In 1949 and 1955 timber sales occurred in the Lost Forest. Since RNA designation in 1972, the Lost Forest has been withdrawn from timber harvest. All activities in the Lost Forest must comply with RNA objectives and must not degrade or unnaturally influence this unique forest ecosystem.

The major continuing disturbance is recreational activity, particularly by off-highway-vehicles.



## Help BLM Protect the Lost Forest

Vehicle use in the RNA is restricted to travel on roads posted as "open". Vehicle travel off roads is prohibited.

If camping in the Lost Forest, please observe any restrictions posted to protect RNA values. To promote natural decay and soil building, no wood cutting or gathering of down wood is allowed.